

Amended March 16, 2016

FINAL REPORT

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT
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Regina Plettenberg, CLERK AND RECORDER

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[Signature]

Deputy

C & R Note: Original Plan 696531

Ret: Klarryse Murphy, Ex Officio

I. LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF RAVALLI COUNTY

To the Citizens of Ravalli County:

The Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission elected on November 4, 2014, present this final report to the citizens of Ravalli County.

The purpose of the Study Commission, as defined by state law, is "to study the existing form and powers of our county government and procedures for delivery of local government services and compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state". After completing these two phases of the study it is the responsibility of the Study Commission to submit a final report. If some change is deemed necessary the Study Commission may submit such proposed change to the qualified electors.

In every phase of this review, this study commission widely publicized its purpose and meetings and invited the public to attend; and also sought advice and information from as many people in the county as possible. Opinions and recommendations were solicited from local government officials, community organizations and citizens. All meetings were open to the public. Public hearings were held the spring and fall of 2015 in Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville, and Florence for a total of 12 formal public hearings.

In this final report we present our recommendations for amendments to the current form of government. We feel this will provide the governmental services expected by the people both today and in the future. Our goal has been to provide the citizens of the county the opportunity to choose amendments to government that they feel will be responsive to local county problems.

The Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission found that Ravalli County functions well under the Commission form of government as provided under Montana Code 7-3-401. We believe issues relating to the number of Commissioners, term length of Commissioners and type of election (partisan versus non-partisan) should be placed on the June 7, 2016 ballot.

II. REPORT SUMMARY

The Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission has thoroughly studied our present form of county government and the alternative forms of government available to counties under state law. We have also studied the future governmental needs of this county.

Ravalli County was one of the three fastest growing counties in MT from 1990 to 2008. That rate of growth has significantly slowed. In 2006 voters felt that more commissioners with shorter terms would better meet the county's growing needs. After two election cycles, voters realized the revised form of government was not meeting their expectations and elected a study commission to conduct another review. After extensive public meetings and community forums as well as individual comments to elected study commissioners, the study commission found the following recommendations based on our findings:

The Study Commission has determined that three Commissioners can manage the county business effectively. There will be savings to the county budget in administrative costs.

Six-year terms will provide more continuity and stability with staggered terms and a stronger base of knowledge for continuing government leadership.

Partisan (ie party affiliation) elections give the voters an idea of the candidate's political philosophies.

Since Commissioners make decisions that affect all residents of the county, the Study Commission believes candidates should be elected at-large.

Minority opinions:

1. Four year terms provide for equally effective government and provide for quicker change.
2. Non-partisan elections may require voters to study a candidate's qualifications as opposed to selecting their party affiliation.
3. Commissioners elected from districts make them more responsive to constituents in their district.

It is the decision of the Study Commission to recommend amendments to the current form of county government.

In summary we recommend:

1. Ravalli County should continue with the Commission form of government. If voters adopt the amendments, they would vote for new commissioners in the 2018 election cycle. The Study Commission recommends to the voters:

- a. A board of County Commissioners of three (3) members.
 - b. Terms of office of the elected board of commissioners shall be six (6) years to allow for a smooth transition of elected commissioners, with one (1) commissioner be elected every two (2) years. (Majority recommendation)
 - c. Voters should decide whether offices are partisan or non-partisan. Majority recommends all elected offices should remain partisan.
2. The vote on our recommendation will take place in the primary election on June 7th, 2016. Changes approved by the voters would be effective in the 2018 election cycle.

If voters decide to reduce to 3 commissioners, the two commissioners that run for office in 2016 would hold two-year terms. In this way three commissioners would stand for office in the 2018 election cycle. If there is no change in the number of commissioners, and voters decide not to switch to three commissioners then they would serve full terms as determined by the voters. In either option, the length of term would be determined by drawing lots as per Montana Code Annotated.

A. Findings of the Study Commission

The voters in Ravalli County chose to study the form of county government at the November 4, 2014 election. The Montana State Constitution allows voters the choice to review the existing form of government once every ten (10) years.

Nineteen (19) citizens interested in serving on the commission filed for the positions and the five (5) receiving the greatest number of votes were selected to serve for a two (2) year period. Following the election, the Study Commission developed a procedure for orderly review of the existing form of government. The commission studied the options available under Montana Code and developed a timetable for completing the process.

The Local Government Center at Montana State University in Bozeman provided training to define the mission and give direction in the review process. The Ravalli County Study Commission commenced regular weekly meetings in January 2015.

Interviews were held with all elected officials and selected department heads that responded to the same set of questions. The interviews provided the Study Commission with an understanding of the duties, responsibilities and interdependency of the departments.

At the time of the preliminary finding report and public meetings, the Study Commission found Ravalli County functions under the Commission form of government as provided under the Montana Code 7-3-401. The Commission form of government as approved in 1976 allows it to function with adopted powers, as opposed to only those powers allowed in the Montana Constitution. This allows voters the ability to choose the number of commissioners, term lengths, type of elections (partisan or non-partisan), and representation by district or at-large.

The Study Commission found that 53 of Montana's 56 counties operate under the Commission Form of government.

After taking input from citizens at public forums, extensive interviews, emails, discussions at regular scheduled meetings, and public comment to individual study commissioners, the Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission recommends retaining the Commission form of Government but with amendments.

B. Key Provisions of the Proposal

1) Number of County Commissioners:

The Commission studied five commissioners versus three commissioners. Ravalli County ranked among the top three (3) growth counties in the state on a percentage basis prior to 2008. Ravalli County growth has slowed significantly and the impact of departments directly involved with growth has slowed. There have been personnel reductions throughout county departments. The Growth Policy was repealed, and the Board of Adjustment and the Streamside Setback Committees were dissolved. The Study Commission found that a board of 5 commissioners was no more effective than a board of 3 commissioners.

All Study Commissioners favor returning to three County Commissioners.

2) Term of Office for County Commissioners:

Voters decided to change to 4-year terms in 2006. The Study Commission studied 4-year terms of office versus 6-year terms of office. Our findings are:

Four-year terms cause a majority of commissioners to be elected. Whether there are 3 or 5 commissioners, a majority may be elected every 4 years.

a) With 5 commissioners - Year 2 – 2 commissioners; Year 4 – 3 commissioners.

b) Or with 3 commissioners - Year 2 – 1 commissioner; Year 4 – 2 commissioners.

This can conceivably set up a scenario where a new majority is elected, with less working knowledge of county government. On the other hand, four-year terms allow for quicker replacement of a commissioner in the event voters are unhappy with their performance.

Six-year terms elect a minority at each election maintaining more stability.

a) With 5 commissioners - Year 2 – 2 commissioners; Year 4 – 2 commissioners; Year 6 – 1 commissioner

b) OR with 3 commissioners - Year 2 – 1 commissioner; Year 4 – 1 commissioner; Year 6 – 1 commissioner.

This allows for continuity in government management with no possibility of a majority being elected in any single election.

Three Study Commissioners favor returning to 6-year terms. Two Study Commissioners favor 4-year terms.



3) Type of Election – Partisan versus Non-Partisan:

The commission heard from citizens with differing opinions whether elected officials should be partisan or non-partisan.

Four Study Commissioners favor retaining Partisan elections.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Majority Recommendations:

- 1. A Board of County Commissioners of three members.**
- 2. Terms of office shall be six years for elected County Commissioners.**
- 3. Elected county offices remain partisan.**

EXHIBIT A
CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT
FOR
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

If retained by the voters, the government of Ravalli County shall be organized under the following provisions of MCA 7-3-111 which authorizes the elected county official form of government;

7-3-111. Statutory basis for elected county official government. (1) For the purpose of determining the statutory basis of existing units of local government after May 2, 1977, each unit of local government organized under the general statutes authorizing the elected county official form of government shall be governed by the following sections:

- (a) 7-3-401;
- (b) 7-3-402;
- (c) 7-3-412(3);
- (d) 7-3-413(1);
- (e) 7-3-414(1);
- (f) 7-3-415(2);
- (g) 7-3-416(2);
- (h) 7-3-417(2);
- (i) 7-3-418;
- (j) 7-3-432(1);
- (k) 7-3-433(1);
- (l) 7-3-434(1);
- (m) 7-3-435(1);
- (n) 7-3-436(1);
- (o) 7-3-437(5); Authorized by 7-4-2301 (1) M.C.A.
- (p) 7-3-438(5); Authorized by 7-4-2301 (1) M.C.A.
- (q) 7-3-439(6);
- (r) 7-3-440(5); Authorized by 7-4-2301 (1) M.C.A.
- (s) 7-3-441(1);
- (t) 7-3-442(1) if the county has elected an auditor;
- (u) 7-3-442(6) if the county has not elected an auditor.

(2) This form has terms of 4 years for all elected officials except commissioners who are elected to 6-year terms. The commission consists of three members.

These sections establish the following form of government, which shall be called the ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIAL FORM.

7-3-401. Commission form. The commission form consists of an elected commission (which may also be called the council) and other elected officers as provided in this part. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees, except for those appointed by other elected officials. Cities and towns, which adopt this form, may distribute by ordinance the executive and administrative powers and duties into departments headed by individual commissioners.

7-3-402. Nature of government. Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.

7-3-412 (3). Selection of commission members. The commission shall be elected at large and nominated by a plan of nomination that may not preclude the possibility of the majority of the electors nominated candidates for the majority of the seats on the commission from persons residing in the district or districts where the majority of the electors reside.

7-3-413 (1). Type of election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis.

7-3-414 (1). Chairman of commission. The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-415 (2). Administrative assistants. The commission may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist them in the supervision and operation of the local government.

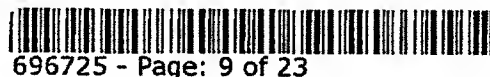
7-3-416 (2). Terms of the commission members. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

7-3-417 (2). Size of commission and community councils. The size of the commission shall be three, and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

7-3-418. Terms of elected officials. The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners in counties adopting the form authorized by Article XI, section 3 (2), of the Montana constitution may not exceed 6 years. Terms of office shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters.

7-3-432 (1). Legal officer. A legal officer (who may be called the county attorney) shall be elected.

7-3-433 (1). Law enforcement officer. A law enforcement officer (who may be called the sheriff) shall be elected.



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7-3-434 (1). Clerk and recorder. A clerk and recorder shall be elected.7-3-435 (1). Clerk of district court. A clerk of district shall be elected.

7-3-436 (1). Treasurer. A treasurer shall be elected.

7-3-437 (5). Surveyor. A surveyor may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

7-3-438 (5). Superintendent of schools. A superintendent of schools may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

7-3-439 (6). Assessor. An assessor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

7-3-440 (5). Coroner. A coroner may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

7-3-441 (1). Public administrator. A public administrator shall be elected.

7-3-442 (5). Auditor. An auditor may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

EXHIBIT B
CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE PROPOSED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT
FOR
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

Upon approval by a majority of electors, the government of Ravalli County, Montana shall retain its designation of Commission Form organized under the following provisions of 7-3-401 M.C.A., as set forth in exhibit A, but adopt certain amendments to the current form in MCA 7-3-401 through 7-3-442:

7-3-413(1) Type of Election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis.

7-3-417. The size of commission. The size of the commission number shall be three.

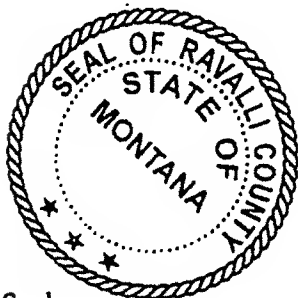
7-3-418. Terms of elected officials. The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners in counties adopting the form authorized by Article XI, section 3(2) of the Montana Constitution may not exceed 6 years. Terms of office shall be six years.

We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is the proposed Plan of Government.

SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016



Seal

ATTEST: *Regina Pittenbergh*
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY

Alan Thompson
Alan Thompson, Chair

Scott Boulanger
Scott Boulanger

George Corn
George Corn

Sharon Schroeder
Sharon Schroeder

Marilee Shockley
Marilee Shockley

EXHIBIT C
CERTIFICATE
FOR THE PLAN OF APPORTIONMENT
OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS
OF
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

If approved by electors in the Special Election, Ravalli County shall be reapportioned into three County Commissioner Districts for the purpose of apportioning seats to the Ravalli County Board of County Commissioners. These three separate districts shall reflect equal representation and authority on the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners. The area of each District shall be as contiguous, compact and equal in population as possible. If voters retain five County Commissioner Districts then the current districts, as reflected in Commissioner Resolution 2005 and if verified as accurate, will remain unchanged.

The following descriptions shall describe the three districts utilizing the current precinct boundaries known to exist September 2015 and the US Census 2010 Block Data provided by Ravalli County GIS Department:

District 1 – The boundaries of the current precincts 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and that part of Precinct 18 that lies North of North Burnt Fork Road and North of South Burnt Fork Road and West of Middle Burnt Fork.

District 2 – The boundaries of the current precincts of 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and that part of Precinct 18 that lies South of North Burnt Fork Road and South of South Burnt Fork Road and part of Precinct 5 that lies North of West Bridge Road and that part of Precinct 7 that lies North of Golf Course Road.

District 3 – The boundaries of the current precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and that part of Precinct 5 that lies South of West Bridge Road and that part of Precinct 7 that lies South of Golf Course Road.

The final adopted version of the Plan of Apportionment complete with maps and population numbers will be available for voter examination no later than 30 days before the special election. We are making every effort to produce these materials as soon as possible.

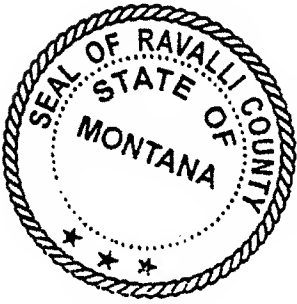
We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is the apportionment of commissioner districts approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.


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Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016



Alan Thompson
Alan Thompson, Chair

Scott Boulanger
Scott Boulanger

George Corn
George Corn

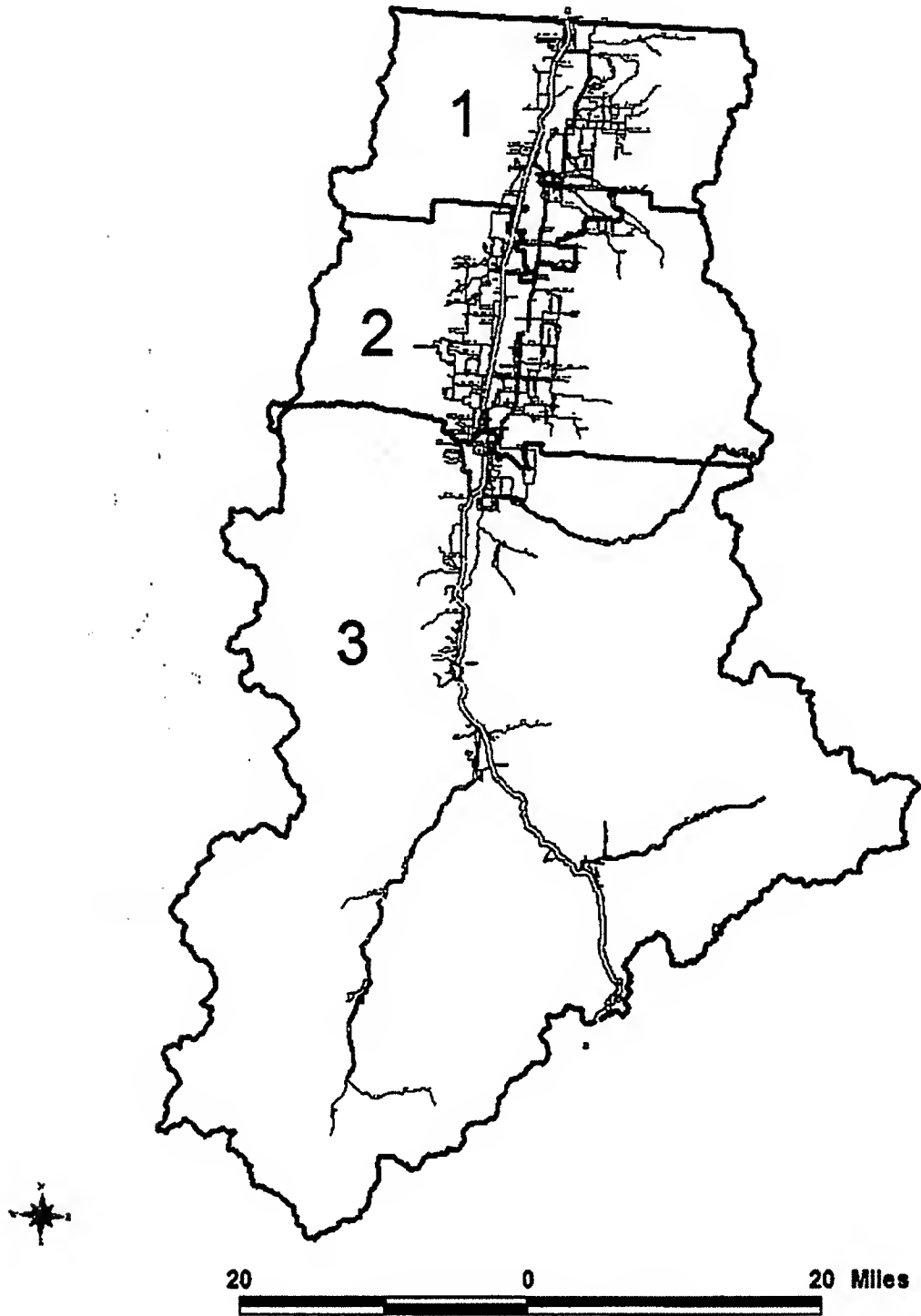
Sharon Schroeder
Sharon Schroeder

Marilee Shockley
Marilee Shockley

Seal

ATTEST: Regina Pitterberg
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY

Proposed Commissioner Districts



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EXHIBIT D

**CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF THE SPECIAL ELECTION
AT WHICH THE AMENDED FORM OF GOVERNMENT
SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE ELECTORS
OF
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA**

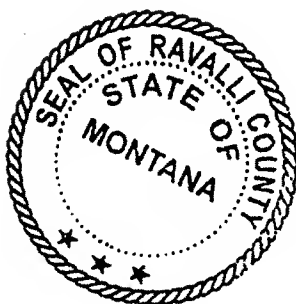
The amended form of government proposed by the Local Government Study Commission shall be submitted to the voters of Ravalli County at a special election to be held with the primary election of June 7, 2016.

We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is the date of the special election approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

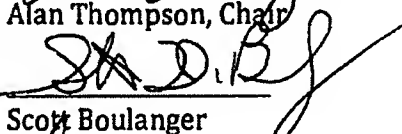
SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

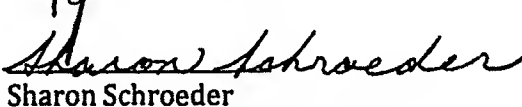
Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016

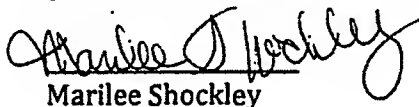



Alan Thompson, Chair


Scott Boulanger


George Corn


Sharon Schroeder


Marilee Shockley

Seal

ATTEST: 
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY



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EXHIBIT E

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE FORM OF THE BALLOT

FOR

RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

For the June 7, 2016 Special Election

Instructions to voters: Place an "X" in the boxes that express your preferences.

OFFICIAL BALLOT ON AMENDMENTS TO CURRENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT

PLEASE VOTE ON ALL ISSUES

QUESTION # ONE - The NUMBER OF SEATS on the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners shall be:

Vote for one

☐ For the adoption of three (3) total seats on the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners, *as recommended by the Ravalli County Study Commission.*

☐ Retain the existing five (5) total seats on the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners

QUESTION # TWO - The TERMS OF OFFICE on the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners shall be:

Vote for one

☐ For the adoption of six (6) year terms of office for the Board of County Commissioners, *as recommended by the Ravalli County Study Commission.*

☐ Retain the existing four (4) year terms of office.

QUESTION # THREE - The TYPE of ELECTION for all elected officials for Ravalli County shall be:

Vote for one:

☐ For the adoption of non-partisan elections.

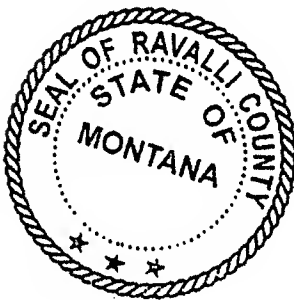
☐ Retain the existing partisan elections, *as recommended by the Ravalli County Study Commission.*

We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is the official ballot approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

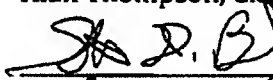
SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016

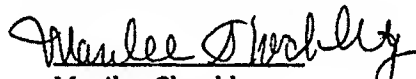



Alan Thompson, Chair


Scott Boulanger


George Corn


Sharon Schroeder


Marilee Shockley

Seal

ATTEST: 
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY

EXHIBIT F

**CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE DATES OF THE FIRST PRIMARY AND GENERAL
ELECTIONS FOR OFFICERS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA
IF THE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED
AND
ESTABLISHING THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE PROPOSAL IF APPROVED**

The date of the primary election for officers of the new government of Ravalli County shall be held at a special election on June 5, 2018.

The date of the General Election for officers of the new government of Ravalli County shall be held at a special election on November 6, 2018.

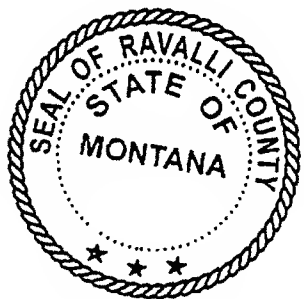
The effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Ravalli County takes effect when the officers take office at 10 a.m. January 2, 2019.

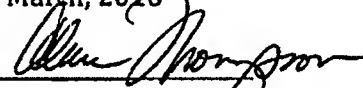
We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that these are the dates of the special primary and general elections and the effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Ravalli County approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

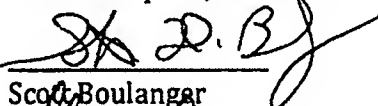
SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016




Alan Thompson, Chair


Scott Boulanger


George Corn


Sharon Schroeder


Marilee Shockley

Seal

ATTEST: 
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY


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EXHIBIT G

CERTIFICATE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA COUNTY COMMISSIONER AVAILABILITY

Beginning in January 2015 the Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission conducted public meetings in Hamilton at the Ravalli County Administrative Building, and public hearings in Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville and Florence.

Citizens expressed concern that it was often difficult to find a Commissioner in the Commissioner offices when they wanted to discuss county business with a Commissioner.

The Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission recommends that the County Commissioners establish a schedule whereby at least one Commissioner is always present for informal citizen discussions during hours when the Administrative Building is open.

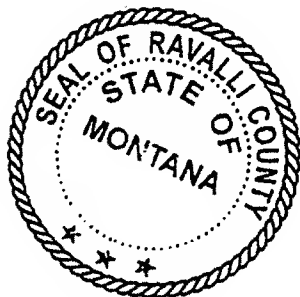
Based on comments in community meetings, we suggest individual Commissioners hold town meetings periodically within their district to enable citizens a chance to discuss issues important to them.

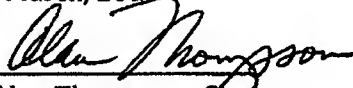
We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is a Supplemental Report, approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

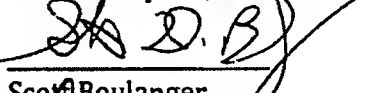
SEAL

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016

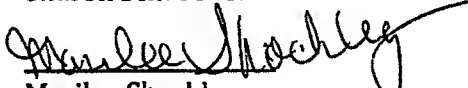



Alan Thompson, Chair



Scott Boulanger


George Corn


Sharon Schroeder


Marilee Shockley

Seal

ATTEST: 
CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY


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EXHIBIT H
CERTIFICATE
SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT
RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA
COUNTY MANAGER

Beginning in January 2015 the Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission conducted public meetings in Hamilton at the Ravalli County Administrative Building, and public hearings in Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville and Florence.

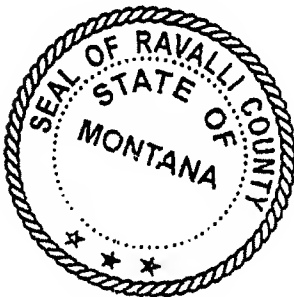
As different types of government available to the county were discussed, a number of citizens expressed an interest in the Commission-Executive or Commission Manager form of government. When the Study Commission explained that an Executive Officer would appoint department heads that are currently elected, interest changed. Citizens want to continue to elect those positions. However, citizens felt the county would benefit if the Commissioners hired a qualified manager trained in public administration to assist them. This person would make the Commissioners more efficient by performing research and making recommendations to them. While this would be an expensive position to fund, it was suggested that this person could end up saving the county more money in terms of settlements than the position would cost.

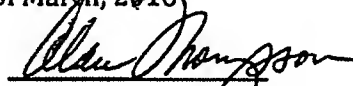
We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is a Supplemental Report approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

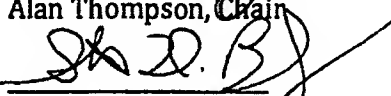
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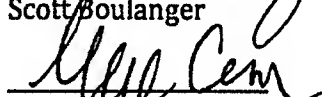
In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

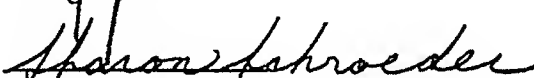
Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016

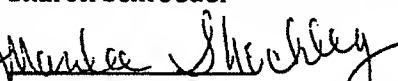



Alan Thompson, Chair



Scott Boulanger


George Corn


Sharon Schroeder


Marilee Shockley

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EXHIBIT I

CERTIFICATE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

PURCHASING PROCEDURES AND DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS

Beginning in January 2015 the Ravalli County Local Government Study Commission conducted public meetings in Hamilton at the Ravalli County Administrative Building, and public hearings in Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville and Florence.

During these public meetings, Ravalli County department heads were interviewed and a recurring comment was how difficult it is for departments to function smoothly when they need to obtain permission from the Commissioners to make purchases already approved during the budgeting process. It is suggested the Commissioners simplify the purchasing operation to allow for budgeted acquisitions without redundant approval of the Commissioners.

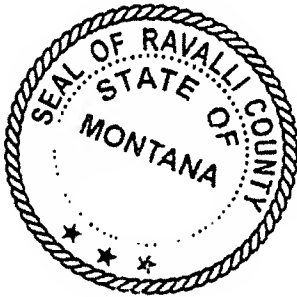
Department Heads and elected officials did not feel there was enough interaction with the Board of County Commissioners and other department heads and advocated that quarterly meetings be held to see what other departments are doing, discuss problems, and possibly share resources.


We, the Study Commissioners of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is a Supplemental Report approved by the Study Commission of Ravalli County.

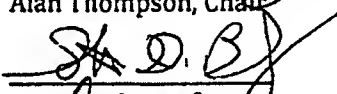
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In testimony whereof, we set our hands.


Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016

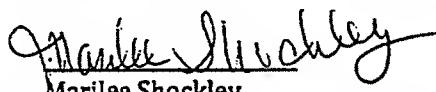



Alan Thompson, Chair


Scott Boulanger

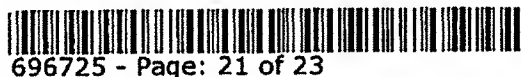

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Marilee Shockley

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EXHIBIT J

CERTIFICATE RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA MINORITY REPORT

TERM LENGTH FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Voters have the choice of changing from our current 4 year term of office to a 6 year term of office for County Commissioners. We believe a 4 year term works best and is consistent with good government. A 4 year term of office, or less, works for all other county offices and all branches of state government except the judiciary. This includes the Office of Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Commissioner of Insurance and Office of Public Instruction. There is nothing mysterious or more complicated in the job of County Commissioner that makes it harder to master than any of these offices. In fact many of them have quite a few more moving parts. 4 year terms make elected officials more responsive to the voters and gives maximum power to the voters consistent with good government. In years in which 2 commissioners are elected it gives voters the power to totally correct the course of government if voters feel that is necessary. In years when only 1 is elected it allows voters to send a powerful message.

We do not believe that County Commissioners need a 6 year term based on the rationale that it takes a few years to "learn the job." The public shouldn't have to pay to educate a County Commissioner on the duties of the office. Finally, it might be argued that a 6 year term for commissioners brings a certain stability to county government. There's a fine line between stability and stagnation and the right of the voters to make frequent determinations as to how their commissioners are serving them outweighs any such dubious claim.

We, the undersigned members of the Study Commission of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is a Minority Report.

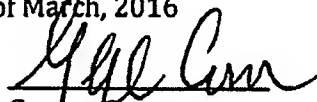
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In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

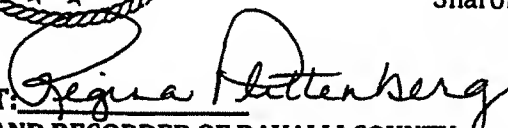
Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of March, 2016



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George Corn


Sharon Schroeder

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EXHIBIT K

CERTIFICATE

RAVALLI COUNTY, MONTANA

MINORITY REPORT

ALL ELECTED COUNTY OFFICES SHOULD BE NONPARTISAN

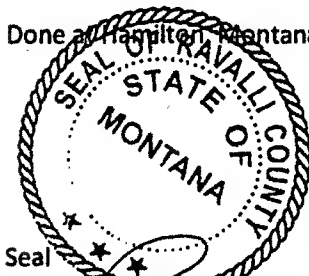
Partisan politics in county government inevitably lead to disasters like the 2014 selection of Valarie Stamey as Ravalli County Treasurer. Ravalli County has the Commission Form of government. This means that the significant duties of all county officers, including County Commissioners, are defined and limited by the Montana Legislature. Party affiliation has little, if anything, to do with the duties of county level officials. Accordingly these local county officials should be elected based on their competence, abilities and skills instead of party labels.

I have reached this conclusion having been a close observer of Ravalli County government for the last 35 years and having served as Ravalli County Attorney for 20 years. But this is not a unique conclusion. Some two hundred and twenty years ago, Washington in his Farewell Address warned us of the "baneful effects" of party and the danger of the "common and continual spirit of mischief" of parties on the operation of government. We have the power to heed his words and remove this obstacle to effective government by voting that all county offices be nonpartisan.

I, the undersigned member of the Study Commission of Ravalli County do hereby certify that this is a Minority Report.

In testimony whereof, I set my hand.

Done at Hamilton, Montana this 16th day of 2016.



Seal

ATTEST:

CLERK AND RECORDER OF RAVALLI COUNTY


George Corn

